

EXHIBIT

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FROM THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

September 9, 2004
JS-1895

U.S.-Based Branch of Al Haramain Foundation Linked to Terror Treasury Designates U.S. Branch, Director

The Treasury Department announced today the designation of the U.S. branch of the Saudi Arabia-based Al Haramain Islamic Foundation (AHF), along with one of its directors, Suliman Al-Buthe. In addition, the AHF branch located in the Union of the Comoros was also designated today.

"We continue to use all relevant powers of the U.S. government to pursue and identify the channels of terrorist financing, such as corrupted charities, at home and abroad. Al Haramain has been used around the world to underwrite terror, therefore we have taken this action to excommunicate these two branches and Suliman Al-Buthe from the worldwide financial community," said Stuart Levey, Treasury's Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence.

The assets of the U.S. AHF branch, which is headquartered in Oregon, were blocked pending investigation on February 19, 2004. On the previous day, a federal search warrant was executed against all property purchased on behalf of the U.S. AHF branch. The investigation involved agents from the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigations (IRS-CI), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The U.S.-based branch of AHF was formally established in 1997. Documents naming Al-Buthe as the organization's attorney and providing him with broad legal authority were signed by Aqeel Abdul Aziz Al-Aqil, the former director of AFH. Aqil has been designated by the United States and the UN 1267 Sanctions Committee because of AHF's support for al Qaeda while under his oversight.

The investigation shows direct links between the U.S. branch and Usama bin Laden. In addition, the affidavit alleges the U.S. branch of AHF criminally violated tax laws and engaged in other money laundering offenses. Information shows that individuals associated with the branch tried to conceal the movement of funds intended for Chechnya by omitting them from tax returns and mischaracterizing their use, which they claimed was for the purchase of a prayer house in Springfield, Missouri.

Other information available to the U.S. shows that funds that were donated to AHF with the intention of supporting Chechen refugees were diverted to support mujahideen, as well as Chechen leaders affiliated with the al Qaeda network.

AHF has operations throughout the Union of the Comoros, and information shows that two associates of AHF Comoros are linked to al Qaeda. According to the transcript from U.S. v. Bin Laden, the Union of the Comoros was used as a staging area and exfiltration route for the perpetrators of the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The AHF branches in Kenya and Tanzania have been previously designated for providing financial and other operational support to these terrorist attacks.

Since March 2002, the United States and Saudi Arabia have jointly designated eleven branches of AHF based on evidence of financial, material and/or logistical support to the al Qaeda network and affiliated organizations. These branches, Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, the

Netherlands, Pakistan, Somalia, and Tanzania, along with the former director of AHF, Aqeel Abdul Aziz Al-Aqil, are named on the UN's 1267 Committee's consolidated list of terrorists associated with al Qaida, Usama bin Laden and the Taliban and are subject to international sanctions.

The entities were designated today pursuant to Executive Order 13224 pursuant to paragraphs (d)(i) and (d)(ii) based on a determination that they assist in, sponsor or provide financial, material, or technological support for, or financial or other services to or in support of, or are otherwise associated with, persons listed as subject to E.O. 13224. These entities also meet the standard for inclusion in the UN 1267 Sanctions Committee's consolidated list because of the support provided to UBL, al Qaida or the Taliban.

Inclusion on the 1267 Committee's list triggers international obligations on all member countries, requiring them to freeze the assets of these offices. Publicly identifying these supporters of terrorism is a critical part of the International campaign to counter terrorism. Additionally, other organizations and individuals are put on notice that they are prohibited from doing business with them.

Blocking actions are critical to combating the financing of terrorism. When an action is put into place, any assets existing in the formal financial system at the time of the order are to be frozen. Blocking actions serve additional functions as well, acting as a deterrent for non-designated parties who might otherwise be willing to finance terrorist activity; exposing terrorist financing "money trails" that may generate leads to previously unknown terrorist cells and financiers, disrupting terrorist financing networks by encouraging designated terrorist supporters to disassociate themselves from terrorist activity and renounce their affiliation with terrorist groups; terminating terrorist cash flows by shutting down the pipelines used to move terrorist-related assets; forcing terrorists to use alternative, more costly and higher-risk means of financing their activities; and engendering international cooperation and compliance with obligations under UN Security Council Resolutions.

The United States has designated 387 individuals and entities as terrorists, their financiers or facilitators. In addition, the global community has frozen over \$142 million in terrorist-related assets.

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Al Haramain Islamic Foundation – Union of the Comoros

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Union of the Comoros

Suliman Al-Buthe
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POB: Egypt
Nationality: Saudi Arabian
Passport No: B049614

For more information on the February 19, 2004 designation of the U.S.-based AHF branch, please visit: <http://www.treasury.gov/press/releases/js1183.htm>.

Note: In June of 2004, the Saudi government announced it was dissolving AHF and other Saudi charities and committees operating aboard and folding their assets into

a newly created entity, the Saudi National Commission for Relief and Charity Work Abroad. According to the Saudi Embassy, the Commission, which will be a non-governmental body, will take over all aspects of private overseas aid operations and assume responsibility for the distribution of private charitable donations from Saudi Arabia.

